



Virginia Housing Commission

July 27, 2021, at 9:30 a.m.

Senate Room A, The Pocahontas Building

<http://dls.virginia.gov/commissions/vhc.htm>

The Virginia Housing Commission (the Commission) met in Richmond with Senator Mamie E. Locke, chair, presiding.¹ The meeting began with introductions and opening remarks followed by presentations and discussion. Materials presented at the meeting are accessible through the [*Commission's meetings webpage*](#).

Presentation: A Federal Perspective on Housing Challenges and Funding Opportunities

Senator Tim Kaine

The Commission heard from Senator Kaine on several initiatives coming before the United States Congress regarding housing challenges and funding opportunities. One initiative that was heavily discussed was the Build Back Better Initiative. Senator Kaine explained the initiative, what funding looks like for the initiative, and the next steps needed in Congress for it to pass. Senator Kaine also explained that his focus is more on health care, education, and the workforce while Senator Mark Warner's focus is on banking and housing.

- Senator Ghazala F. Hashmi asked about the possibilities of assisting the immigrant and undocumented communities, or if they had opportunities to access the funding, more specifically under the housing rental program discussed. Senator Kaine responded by saying that he would advocate for immigrant communities to have access to the housing investments and funding. He stated that there was a separate piece of the reconciliation bill under the Build Back Better Initiative that deals with immigration reform.
- Forest Hayes asked Senator Kaine's thoughts on providing opportunities to minority developers, for example in the areas of dedicated funding, technical support, and mentorship. Senator Kaine stated that he could only speak to the reconciliation bill on this matter and that Senator Warner is looking at the infrastructure bill. Senator Kaine stated that the reconciliation bill will include funding for minority communities, which also includes adjustments to the tax code, and that he thinks it would be possible to use some of the funding to advance opportunities or provide preferable tax treatments for housing in opportunity zones.

¹ **Members Present:** Senator Mamie E. Locke (chair), Delegate Daniel W. Marshall, III (vice-chair), Senator George L. Barker, Senator Ghazala F. Hashmi, Delegate David L. Bulova, Delegate Marcus B. Simon, Forest Hayes, Laura D. Lafayette

Members Absent: Delegate Jeffrey M. Bourne, Delegate Barry D. Knight, Lawrence Pearson

Presentation: The Status of Evictions and the Rent Relief Program in the Commonwealth

Martin Wegbreit, Director of Litigation, Central Virginia Legal Aid Society

Pamela Kestner, Chief Deputy, Department of Housing and Community Development

Beth Godwin-Jones, Godwin-Jones & Price, P.C.

The Commission heard several presentations on the status of evictions and rent relief in the Commonwealth. Mr. Wegbreit gave a presentation on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Eviction Protections, Ms. Kestner provided an update on the Virginia Rent Relief Program (the Program), and Ms. Godwin-Jones gave a presentation on the State of Rental Housing, Evictions, and Renter Protections in Virginia.

- With regard to the Program, Laura D. Lafayette asked Ms. Kestner, based on the rate at which funding for the Program is being absorbed, is there an estimate as to when the money will run out? Ms. Kestner responded that she was confident the funds would last through June 2022 and possibly through the end of the year. Ms. Kestner stated that her predictions depend on the economy, however, and that the Department of Housing and Community Development monitors the funds weekly.
- Delegate Daniel W. Marshall, III, asked Ms. Kestner for further details concerning the Program, such as whether it operates through a grant or a loan and how the application and payment process works. Ms. Kestner answered that the Program is a grant and applicants have to reapply every three months. The grant funds go directly to the named landlord but Ms. Kestner said it is hard to pinpoint a direct timeframe for when a landlord receives the funds because of the paperwork process and the different payment methods.

Presentation: Housing Developments Near Rail Transit Centers for Very Low-Income Persons

Senator Scott A. Surovell

Senator Surovell gave a brief overview of the state's progress on increasing affordable housing, focusing on the Northern Virginia area. He provided information on a bill draft that requires any tall building within a quarter mile of a metro station to have a percentage of the housing designated as affordable housing. The committee did not take action on the bill draft.

- Senator Locke asked if this type of affordable housing is becoming a national trend. Senator Surovell responded that yes, it is; he further stated that finding affordable housing is becoming a real problem.

Presentation: 3-D Printing as a Means for Producing Affordable Housing

Susan Dewey, CEO, Virginia Housing

The committee heard a brief presentation on 3-D printing as a means for producing affordable housing. Ms. Dewey offered the committee an opportunity to tour a location with the first 3-D homebuilding technology in Virginia.

Next Meeting

The next full Commission meeting will be held December 8 at 10:00 a.m.



For more information, see the [*Commission's website*](#)
or contact Division of Legislative Services staff.

